



# **Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

## **SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER REFERRAL SERVICE**

### **Policies and Procedures**

Approved by CDHH  
Updated March 15, 1995  
Updated January 16, 2002

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## 1) Introduction

1.1 Purpose: This document is intended to summarize standard, best practice guidelines for the referral and provision of sign language Interpreting/transliterating services in Rhode Island. This manual may serve as a reference regarding procedures and ethical standards for both those administering and/or receiving sign language interpreting/transliterating services.

### 1.2 Definitions

- A) Consumer: any individual who is hearing, Deaf, Oral deaf, Deaf-Blind, Late deafened, or Hard-of Hearing who may use an interpreter/transliterator.
- B) Requester: any person, agency, or entity that secures the services of the interpreter/transliterator. The requester is financially responsible for the provision of said services and is also referred to as the paying party.
- C) Interpreter: an individual who renders a message between spoken English and American Sign Language (ASL).
- D) Transliterator: an individual who renders a message between spoken English and a Sign English form that utilizes ASL signs, but more closely follows the grammar and syntax of spoken English (i.e. PSE or Contact Sign).
- E) RID Certified Interpreter/Transliterator: person who possesses valid National Certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.

Common RID certifications:

- CI – Certificate of Interpretation
- CT – Certificate of Transliteration
- CSC – Comprehensive Skills Certificate
- SC:L – Specialist Certificate: Legal
- IC – Interpretation Certificate
- TC – Transliteration Certificate
- CDI – Certified Deaf Interpreter
- OTC – Oral Transliteration Certificate

- F) NAD Certified Interpreter: person who possesses a valid certification level III, IV, or V from the National Association of the Deaf.
- G) Screened Interpreter/Transliterator: person who possesses a recognized state screening or state equivalent.

H) Licensed Interpreter/Transliterater: person who possesses valid license(s) to practice interpreting/transliterating in Rhode Island. Questions about specific categories of licensure and the limitations therein should be directed to the RI Dept. of Health – Department of Licensure and Regulation, 3 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908, phone: 401-222-2827 (hit zero and asked to be directed to Donna Dickerman's office).

## **2) Procedures**

- 2.1 An Interpreter Referral Service may be utilized to secure the services of the interpreter/transliterater or the interpreter/transliterater may be contacted directly. Because of the recognized shortage of qualified interpreters/transliteraters, it is recommended that requests be made at least 2 weeks in advance. Requests made with less than 2 weeks notice should still be honored. Regardless of the notice provided, a qualified interpreter/transliterater can not be assured. If no interpreter/transliterater is available, the requester should be notified at least 2 business days prior to the assignment date. Consumers should request interpreting/transliterating services directly from the person, agency, or place in which the services will be used. Said person, agency, or place shall be the requester of services or paying party. Questions about particular referral service policies should be directed to that referral agency or the interpreter/transliterater.
- 2.2 The requester should provide the following information to a referral coordinator or the interpreter/transliterater.
  - A) Name and phone number of requesting party (paying party)
  - B) Name of consumer(s)
  - C) Day, time, and precise location of assignment (address, bldg., floor, dept, suite, and room)
  - D) Length of assignment
  - E) Nature/type of assignment
  - F) Consumer's language preference if known
  - G) Request for preferred interpreter/transliterater if any
  - H) Billing information (address, contact name, phone number)
- 2.3 Follow-up assignments may be arranged at the discretion of the interpreter/transliterater, paying party, and consumers. Follow-up assignments may be routed through an interpreter referral service.
- 2.4 Replacement interpreters: If the interpreter/transliterater cannot fulfill the requirements of an assignment that he/she has accepted, then the interpreter/transliterater may find his/her own qualified replacement. An interpreter referral service may assist in securing a replacement interpreter/transliterater.

**3) Assignment categories**

- 3.1 Legal/Court settings: Section 8-5-8 of Rhode Island General Laws mandates that the court must provide an interpreter for a hearing-impaired witness and/or party in a court proceeding, including a juror. Because of the serious nature and potential consequences to parties involved in legal proceedings, it is best practice that interpreters/transliterators be RID certified or NAD level V for all legal/court assignments.
- 3.2 Emergency settings: All interpreter referral services should develop specific policies and procedures for emergency assignments. Individual interpreters/transliterators should have stated policies for emergency settings.
- 3.3 Other settings: Interpreter/Transliterators shall accept assignments based on qualifications, experience, and skills in a particular setting.

**4) Eligibility of Interpreter/Transliterators:** All interpreters/transliterators working in Rhode Island shall adhere to the Rules and Regulations for Licensing Interpreters for the Deaf (R5-71-ID). Said rules and regulations are available from the RI Dept. of Health – Department of Licensure and Regulation, 3 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908-5097, phone: 401-222-2827 (hit zero and asked to be directed to Donna Dickerman's office).

**5) Fee Schedule and Fee Policies**

- 5.1 Fees: Interpreters/transliterators: will set their own fees for services. It is standard practice that interpreters/transliterators charge a minimum/appearance fee that is equal to 2 hours at the interpreter/transliterator's standard rate. Billing beyond said "appearance fee/2 hour minimum" is at the interpreter/transliterator's discretion. Billing, cancellation, and payment arrangements will be at the interpreter/transliterator's discretion and arranged directly with paying party.
- 5.2 Supplemental Fee: Interpreters/transliterators may charge a supplemental fee for adverse circumstances (i.e. emergency assignments or last minute requests). Supplemental fees will be at the interpreter/transliterator's discretion and arranged directly with the paying party.
- 5.3 Mileage/travel time: Interpreters/transliterators may charge for mileage and/or travel time for assignments. These fees will be arranged directly with the paying party.

**6) Assignment Protocol**

- 6.1 Two-hours or less: Generally, one interpreter/transliterators may accept an assignment that is expected to require 2 hours or less of time. However, the two-hour guideline shall be at the interpreter/transliterators's discretion.
- 6.2 Multiple Interpreters/transliterators at Same Assignment: For assignments that are expected to exceed 2 hours, paying parties are strongly encouraged to secure more than one interpreter/transliterators.
- 6.3 Special Circumstances: Some assignments that are less than 2 hours in length may require multiple interpreters/transliterators (i.e. lectures, presentations, and meetings containing a heavy information load and providing few or no breaks). Also, situations that present complex communication needs (i.e. Deaf-Blind, CDI, concurrent sessions, multiple consumers and/or a request for multiple modes of communication) may require more than one interpreter/transliterators.
- 6.4 Cancellation of Assignment: Interpreters/transliterators should have a stated policy and may charge for a fee for late cancellation of a confirmed assignment by the requester. Standard cancellation policy is 2 business days prior to date of assignment and is at the discretion of the interpreter/transliterators. For on-going assignments (i.e. college classes), the interpreter/transliterators may require severance pay for a pre-determined period of time.

**7) Professional and Ethical Standards:** The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) puts forth the RID Code of Ethics which exist to protect and guide both interpreters/transliterators and consumers. It is expected that every working interpreter/transliterators know, understand, and adhere to the RID Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics as defined by the RID are listed below.

- 7.1 Interpreters/transliterators shall keep all assignment-related information strictly confidential.
- 7.2 Interpreters/transliterators shall render the message faithfully, always conveying the content and spirit of the speaker using the language most readily understood by the person(s) whom they serve.
- 7.3 Interpreters/transliterators shall not counsel, advise or interject personal opinions.
- 7.4 Interpreters/transliterators shall accept assignments using discretion with regard to skill, setting, and the consumers involved.
- 7.5 Interpreters/transliterators shall request compensation for services in a professional and judicious manner.

- 7.6 Interpreters/transliterators shall function in a manner appropriate to the situation.
- 7.7 Interpreters/transliterators shall strive to further knowledge and skills through participation in workshops, professional meetings, interaction with professional colleagues, and reading of current literature in the field.
- 7.8 Interpreters/transliterators, by virtue of membership in or certification by the RID , Inc., shall strive to maintain high professional standards in compliance with the Code of Ethics.

**8) Feedback and Disciplinary Actions:** Presently, RI DOH is the appropriate point of contact regarding complaints about an interpreter/transliterators service. Concerns about the service received by a paying party can be directed to the Department of Health – Department of Licensure and Regulation, 3 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908, phone: 401-222-2827 (hit zero and asked to be directed to Donna Dickerman's office). Paying parties are also encouraged to make any concerns known to the referral agent for a particular assignment.